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COUNTRY China

SUBJECT Land Utilization and Distribution

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1. China remains to-day, as in the past, predominantly an agricultural society. Despite the absence of reliable occupational statistics, the consensus of opinion is that almost four-fifths of the population of China depends for its livelihood on the soil. On the standard of life of this great army of cultivators, both her economic prosperity, and political stability must depend. Any realistic study of modern China, therefore, may well start from the facts relating to the utilization of farm land and the distribution of landed property.

Land utilization

2. Area and arable land: The area of China has been estimated at three and one-third million square miles, more than 300,000 square miles larger than continental United States of America. This gross figure includes 1,459,000 square miles in the eighteen provinces of China proper, 407,000 square miles in the three northeastern provinces of Manchuria, 400,000 square miles in the four provinces of Inner Mongolia, 415,000 square miles in the two provinces of Necker Tibet, and 415,000 square miles in the single, far-northwestern province of Sinkiang.
3. The great land mass of China is very rugged, with the topography varying from low plains of few feet above the sea level to high plateaus of over 10,000 feet in altitude. The general slope of the country runs from the west to the east and from the north to the south. Taking the country as a whole, plateaus with elevations of more than 4500 feet above the sea level account for as much as 56% of the total area, and highlands with elevations from 600 to 4500 feet constitute 32%. Only 12% of the total area is in plains, found principally in the deltas of the Yangtze and Hwang Rivers and the rolling lowland of central Manchuria.

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4. In a country so vast in area and so varied in topography as China, the conditions of precipitation and climate must also be diversified. In precipitation, it varies from a mean annual rainfall of less than 1.6 inch in Gobi Desert to that of over 300 inches at Omei Shan in Szechuan Province. In temperature, it ranges from torrid heat in South and Southeastern China to arctic vigor in North and Northwestern China. In the Yangtze Valley of Central China, rainfall ranges from 40 to 60 inches, and the growing season is 300 days long. In North China, including the Great Plain, the Loess Hills and Jehol Mountain and extending to the Tsingling Range and the Hwai River Valley, rainfall averages 25 inches but varies widely, and the length of growing season is 240 days. In Manchuria, five months have averages below freezing with a growing season of less than 150 days, and rainfall decreases from 40 inches on east to 15 inches in the west. In South China covering the Western River Basin and the coastal regions, the growing season is nearly a year long, and rainfall exceeds 80 inches on the exposed mountain slopes. Climatically, China has an arid northwest with annual rainfall from zero to 6 or 7 inches, a semiarid north with annual rainfall from 6 or 7 inches on the west edge to 25 inches near the coast, and a humid south with annual rainfall from 40 inches in the upper and western limits to 100 inches along the coast near Canton. Taking the country as a whole, 65% of the total area has an annual precipitation of less than 20 inches, and regions with an annual precipitation of less than 10 inches amount to as much as 40% of the total area. Only 35% of the total area of the country has an annual precipitation of 20 inches or more.
5. At the risk of over-simplification, it may be said that China is divided into a non-agricultural interior embracing two-thirds of the total area and an agricultural coast comprising only one-third of the entire country. The latter is known as "Agricultural China", located between the ocean, the deserts, the plateaus and the mountains, within which approximately 98% of the Chinese people live. Not all of the "Agricultural China", however, is arable. With the exception of the Eastern Lowlands, including the Manchuria Plain, the Hwang River Plain and the Yangtze Delta Plain, Agricultural China is also rugged, making transportation difficult and livelihood hard to earn. In Southern Uplands, for instance, level land is nowhere more than a few miles; hills and mountains are always in sight. Even in Szechuan Lowland, hilltops rise from 3000 to 4000 feet with valley bottoms at half the elevations. Climatically, Agricultural China comprises a semiarid north and humid south with an uneven distribution of rainfall and the unreliability of precipitation from year to year. In the wheat regions of North China, two-thirds of the annual precipitation falls during summer months and one-twentieth falls during the winter months. The amounts of rainfall in autumn and spring are equally divided, but they are so small in quantity as to make crop-planting extremely difficult at the proper times. Honan has received 18 inches of rainfall in a single day, while a station in Kwangsi with an annual average rainfall of 50 inches once dropped to 8 inches for a period of 12 months. Mountainous regions exposed to typhoons from the South China Sea receive around 100 inches of rainfall, a large proportion of which usually comes in a few days, thus frequently resulting in sudden overflowing of rivers. The variability of precipitation in percentage from the mean annual figure in North China ranges from 25% to 35%. This means that any place with a normal rainfall of 10 inches per year may only receive 6 inches in any year thus giving rise to serious drought and crop failures.
6. Various estimates on the extent of arable land in China have been made. O E Baker is of the opinion that the land area physically suitable to crops in China amounts to a total of 700 million acres, or 32.8% of the area of the country (1). Wong Wen-hao has made a similar optimistic observation (3). He estimates that the arable land in China ranges from 670 million acres to 810 million acres, or from 31.4% to 37.5% of the area of the country. After making a careful study of Wong Wen-hao's estimate, and using the same methodology, Chen Chang-hen arrives at the conclusion that the arable land in China ranges from 400 million acres to 450 million acres, or 18.8% to 21.1% of the area of the country (3). All these estimates are admittedly too high. On the basis of Buck's field study of land utilization in China, a more realistic estimate of China's arable land may be made. The arable land in Buck's eight agricultural regions of China amounts to 267 million acres (4). The only other agricultural region of China not included in Buck's investigation is the three northeastern provinces of Manchuria, which have an estimated area of arable land of 90 million acres (5). The arable land in China, therefore cannot be safely estimated at more than 357 million acres, or 16.7% of the area of the country. Even most

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optimistically considered, China is poor in agricultural resources. The highest figure of 37.5% as estimated by Wong Wen-hao compares unfavorably with the comparable portion of the United States of America which is 51%.

7. Land under cultivation: Estimates of the land under cultivation in China are also at great variance. O E Baker puts the cultivated land in China at 180 million acres (6), and Chen Chang-hen at 205 million acres (7). Both of them definitely err in the under-estimation of China's land under cultivation as they do in the over-estimation of that capable of cultivation. Other estimates on the cultivated land in China which may be noted are 263 million acres by the Agricultural Commission in 1914 (8a) and 253 million acres by D K Lieu in 1928 (8). On the basis of field investigations conducted in 1929-1933, Buck estimates the cultivated land in his eight agricultural regions, which cover a gross area of 1,400,000 square miles but which exclude the three northeastern provinces of Manchuria, at 232 million acres or 27% of the area (9). With the addition of the estimated cultivated land of 40 million acres for the three northeastern provinces, the land acreage under cultivation in China totals 272 million acres or 12.7% of the area of the country. The latest official figure on cultivated land in China, as compiled by the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry in 1946, is 1,397,646,000 Shih Mow, or about 230,250,000 acres (10), which appear less by 14% than the present estimation on the basis of Buck's field study. It must be admitted that official statistics on cultivated land in China always has the downward bias. Sample surveys on land by Buck show that the reported official figure on cultivated land is less than the actual by an average of approximately one-fifth (11).
8. The difference between the estimated acreage of 357 million acres of arable land and that of 272 million of cultivated land may be taken as the most probable acreage of arable uncultivated land in China. Although not all the land that is cultivable has been actually put under cultivation, the opinion prevalent in China that the country has vast areas potentially cultivable is erroneous. Recent studies of the three northeastern provinces put the unused land capable of cultivation in that region at approximately 50 million acres (12). Even if this figure could be increased by a considerable percentage, it would not account for the unwarranted optimistic opinion of vast areas still available for cultivation. It must also be regarded as highly improbable that the eighteen provinces of China proper possess a large area of arable uncultivated land. In his study, Buck arrives at a figure of 35 million acres of arable uncultivated land for the eight agricultural regions, but guards his conclusion with the reservation that "the limited available data make it impossible to estimate accurately the potentially arable land of China, especially if economic production is to be considered. In any consideration of the quantity of additional land which might be brought under cultivation, it must be remembered that land is also continually becoming unfit for cultivation for one reason or another, such as erosion and floods covering good soil with sand" (13). In light of his reservation, Buck is inclined to place the arable uncultivated land for the eight agricultural regions far below the limit of 35 million acres. According to him, the maximum amount of land that can be made available for cultivation in China proper, including the arable uncultivated land as well as the cultivated land now lying idle or not so intensely exploited, is no more than 25 million acres (14).
9. The ratio of cultivated land to the total area of China, namely: 12.7% for the entire country and 27% for Buck's eight agricultural regions compares with 27.9% for India, 15.7% for Japan, 19.9% for Korea, 13.3% for Philippines, 13.5% for the region of Asia and Far East, 22.5% for Great Britain, 22.6% for the United States of America, 43.8% for Germany and 44.6% for Italy. A closer examination of the types of land uses in China from the result of Buck's investigation of agricultural China reveals a state of development even more in China's disfavor. In the first place, China is a land practically devoid of pasture farming. Only 4.6% of her gross area is devoted to this purpose, as compared with 8.7% in Japan, 17.8% in Philippines, 17.4 in Germany, 20.1 in Italy, 35.1 in the United States and 56.8% in Great Britain. In the second place, China is a land without much forestry. Much of the forest land in earlier times has now disappeared through neglect or destruction. The primary reason is economic, as most of the forest land is converted into land for arable farming; where it is not fit for arable purposes the forest is removed for use as timber or fuel. The forest land in China today covers only

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8.7% of the gross area, as compared with 13.1% for India, 54.5% for Japan, 77.5% for Korea, 58.2% for Philippines, 16% for Italy, 27.2% for Germany and 31.9% for the United States. Thirdly, the proportion of the uncultivated land that is not productive must be considered high in agricultural China. According to Buck's investigation, only 52.5% of the uncultivated land is used for productive purposes, with percentage distribution by uses as follows: forest, 22.8%; trees and bushes, 28.1%; grass, 23.8%; reeds, 5.2%; pasture, 11.9%; and other uses, 8.2%. Buck adds: "most of this land is unfit for agriculture, but some of it would be better utilized in forest than in grass and bushes". The reasons for the unproductivity of land in the 172 hsien surveyed by Buck are several. "Such land was reported by 55% of the hsien as too stony, by 14% as being caused by presence of graves, by 8% as too much sand, salt or alkali and the remainder either for other causes or as unknown". (15).

10. Unit of cultivation: One salient feature of China's land utilization is the minute unit of cultivation. Chinese farms are extremely small, the mean size being 3.67 acres, as compared with that of 156.9 acres in the United States. The largest farm in China is found in the average of 11.26 acres for the province of Suiyuan and the smallest in the average of 1.94 acres for the province of Kwangtung. The degree of intensity in land utilization in respect to labor decreases from south to north, as the acreage of cultivated land per farm increases steadily in the same direction. As shown in the table, the size of cultivated land per farm in the provinces in the northwest, north and northeast, exceeds that in the provinces in the lower Yangtze, southwest and southeast. This difference in the scale of farming is obviously due to such more favorable factors in South China as greater rainfall, higher temperature and longer growing season making it possible for a morsel of land to yield a subsistence living for the cultivator.

Cultivated land in China (16)

| Northeast            | % of total area<br>cultivated | Area of cultivated<br>land per person<br>(in acres) | Area of cultivated<br>land per farm<br>(in acres) |
|----------------------|-------------------------------|---|---|
| Chahar               | 3.7                           | 1.64  | 8.26  |
| Jehol                | 8.9                           | 1.65  | 9.67  |
| Heilungkiang         | 9.1                           | 1.86  | 11.10   |
| Kirin                | 18.4                          | 1.29  | 7.74  |
| Liaoning             | 14.5                          | .96   | 5.76  |
| <u>Northwest</u>     |                               |   |   |
| Kansu                | 4.5                           | 1.07  | 5.43  |
| Shansi               | 31.1                          | 1.21  | 6.40  |
| Shensi               | 16.2                          | .96   | 5.42  |
| Ningsia              | 0.5                           | 1.09  | 5.63  |
| Suiyuan              | 3.3                           | 2.06  | 11.26   |
| Chinghai             | 0.3                           | 1.07  | 5.43  |
| Sinkiang             | 0.5                           | 1.48  | 7.14  |
| <u>Lower Yangtze</u> |                               |   |   |
| Anhui                | 34.7                          | .79   | 4.49  |
| Hunan                | 16.3                          | .43   | 2.12  |
| Hupei                | 23.1                          | .55   | 2.68  |
| Kiangsi              | 16.7                          | .44   | 2.17  |
| Kiangsu              | 52.0                          | .56   | 2.77  |
| <u>North Plain</u>   |                               |   |   |
| Honan                | 40.4                          | .62   | 3.20  |
| Hopei                | 51.6                          | .74   | 4.25  |
| Shangtung            | 45.4                          | .50   | 2.80  |

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|                  | % of total area<br>cultivated | Area of cultivated<br>land per person<br>(in acres) | Area of cultivated<br>land per farm<br>(in acres) |
|------------------|-------------------------------|---|---|
| <u>Southeast</u> |                               |   |   |
| Chekiang         | 26.7                          | .48   | 2.16  |
| Fukien           | 11.8                          | .48   | 2.13  |
| Kwangsi          | 8.4                           | .37   | 1.95  |
| Kwangtung        | 12.4                          | .34   | 1.94  |
| <u>Southwest</u> |                               |   |   |
| Kweichow         | 8.6                           | .61   | 3.19  |
| Szechuan         | 24.0                          | .65   | 3.91  |
| Yunnan           | 4.3                           | .60   | 3.12  |
| Sikang           | 0.1                           | .39   | 2.37  |
| <u>China</u>     | 12.7                          | .70   | 3.67  |

Cultivated Land in China (17)

|   | % of total area<br>cultivated | % of cultivated<br>land irrigated | Crop area<br>per farm<br>(acre) | Farm population<br>per sq m of<br>crop area |
|---|-------------------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------|---|
| Agricultural China<br>(Without Manchuria) | 27%                           | 47%                               | 3.8                             | 1,485                                       |
| Wheat Provinces<br>(Without Manchuria)    | 39%                           | 18%                               | 5.1                             | 1,128                                       |
| Winter Wheat-Kaoliang<br>Region           | 66%                           | 10                                | 5.1                             | 1,165                                       |
| Winter Wheat-millet<br>Region             | 22%                           | 10                                | 3.7                             | 1,234                                       |
| Spring Wheat Region                       | 18%                           | 13                                | 7.3                             | 838   |
| Manchurian Soybean-<br>kaoliang Region    | 20%                           | 5                                 | 8.0                             | 800   |
| Rice provinces                            | 18%                           | 62                                | 2.8                             | 1,746                                       |
| Yangtze Rice-wheat<br>Region              | 35%                           | 61                                | 3.5                             | 1,360                                       |
| Rice-tea Region                           | 18%                           | 78                                | 2.2                             | 1,788                                       |
| Szechuan Rice Region                      | 32%                           | 70                                | 3.1                             | 1,610                                       |
| Double Cropping Rice<br>Region            | 13%                           | 69                                | 2.3                             | 2,072                                       |
| Southwestern Rice<br>Region               | 7%                            | 82                                | 2.0                             | 2,636                                       |

11. The overwhelming pressure of population on land in China is shown by the extremely low ratio of cultivated land to people, the average for the country being only 0.7 acre per capita. The province of Suiyuan in North China has the highest average per capita acreage of cultivated land (2.06 acres), while Kwangtung has the lowest (0.34 acre). The eight agricultural regions included in Buck's investigation give an average density of 1485 persons per square mile of crop area. As shown in Table the density per square mile of crop area for the eight agricultural regions varies from the

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minimum average of 858 persons in the Spring Wheat Area in the northwest to the maximum average of 2636 persons in the Southwestern Rice Area in South China. Indeed, the farm population in China has been squeezed into the confines of every little valley, up the slopes of every hill where any soil can be found, such as the terraced areas in the province of Szechuan, and onto marginal lands where scanty and erratic rainfall constitute a constant hazard to the peasant. It has caused a greater modification of the terrain than that of any other area of equal size in the world. From one-fourth to one-fifth of the land under cultivation in China is terraced, and a much larger proportion of it is irrigated, some under systems which have existed for over two thousand years. In the Rice Regions of China an average of 62% of the land under cultivation is irrigated, whereas in the Wheat Regions of North China an average of 18% of the cultivated land is under irrigation which usually increases the yield by 60% or more. As shown in the Table as much as 76% of the cultivated land in the Rice-tea Region and 82% of the cultivated land in the Southwestern Rice Region are under irrigation (18).

12. Fragmentation of cultivation: The small size of farms in China, due to pressure of population on land, is accompanied by another phenomenon, namely: fragmentation of cultivation which owes its origin to different causes but presents also serious handicaps to the effectiveness of China's land utilization. A Chinese farm does not lie in a compact block. On the average, there are about six parcels per farm. Each parcel contains more than one field; the average number of fields per farm is about eleven. In some extreme cases, however, such as in Fowling, Szechuan, the average number of parcels per farm is fifty-six and the average number of fields per farm goes as high as seventy.
13. The reasons for the fragmentation of cultivation in China are both social and economic. First, under the system of private land ownership, there has been no legal restriction on land partition and land transfer. Second, in accordance with the custom for inheritance, the property of a deceased is equally divided among the surviving sons. With the variation of land quality, good land and inferior land are divided separately in each case among the heirs in order to ensure that one may not have all the best and another all the worst, and that each one of them may have both wet and dry land, hilly land for fuel and manure, and level land for crops. The dispersion of plots thus established in a farm is perpetuated and extended by further division and re-division through inheritance from generation to generation. Finally, the uplands of South China and southwestern China in particular, a farm is composed of various parcels because of topography. Each parcel of terraced land is partitioned into minute fields by artificial walls for the purpose of irrigation or that of maintaining a sufficiently high water level suitable for rice plantation.
14. Fragmentation of land in a Chinese farm, which reminds one of the strip system in Europe before the Agricultural Revolution in the sixteenth century, places many difficulties in the way of agricultural progress and of fuller use of China's limited land resources. In particular, it uses up land in boundaries, gives rise to difficulties in irrigation, limits the application of machinery, increases the cost of operation, and reduces labor efficiency in cultivation. A feasible program of land consolidation is obviously an essential prerequisite for China's agricultural reconstruction.
15. Misuse of land: There have been misuses of land in China, due primarily to custom and economic necessity, which have had grave consequences on the farm economy of the country. In China the custom has been for each family to have its own burial grounds, and the graves may be located individually or in family graveyards. Usually the geomancer locates the grave site on the basis of the feng shui, the supposed maginal wind and water influences which might bring prosperity to the posterity. Graves are oftentimes placed in the fields of farms, in spots determined as desirable or lucky by the geomancer, regardless of their occupation of arable land or their hindrance to farm operation. Buck's survey shows that 64% of the grave land is in cultivated fields; 15% in arable uncultivated land and 21% in non-arable land. Over four-fifths of the grave land in North China is in cultivated fields, as compared with less than one-half in South China. The area of farm land occupied by graves constitutes almost 2% of all farm land in China. This means a total area of 2,552,000 acres for the eight agricultural regions included in Buck's study which could support over 400,000 farm families (20).

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16. While much commutation should be given to Chinese farmers for the maintenance of the productivity of the land in the country through many centuries, there are extensive areas subject to serious erosion that have declined in productivity or have gone out of cultivation. Much of the soil erosion found in China is essentially a form of modification by man with the assistance of nature. By dire economic necessity, peasants have cut the forests or broken grasslands for fuel, partly consumed by themselves and partly carried into the nearest market town for sale. Land that should be utilized in forest is being used for grass and bushes which are annually shaved bare in autumn for the same reason. The consequence of all this is that the soil thus exposed is being slowly washed away. One needs only to observe the sea of gulleys in the loessial highlands of the northwest and the heavily laden muddy waters of the rivers extending far out into the sea, or to note the rate with which the Yangtze River is building up the coast of the province of Kiangsu, to realize that the upland soils of China are being slowly and continuously damaged or destroyed. Soil erosion which results from a kind of misuse of land in China should merit a most careful study to protect the limited land resources of the country for future generations.

#### Land distribution

17. Observers frequently tend to overlook the importance of the question of land distribution in China. Although a unit of cultivation and a unit of ownership are two totally different conceptions, writers on Chinese land problems have interest in the former, to the neglect of the latter. Impressed by the seriousness of the problem presented by the multitude of minute holdings for cultivation, inequalities of the distribution of landed property have been regarded as a phenomenon of minor significance. While it is true that large land estates in the European sense of the term are seldom found in China, we must nevertheless recognize that inequalities of land distribution are of increasing gravity. The system of land ownership, which is the institutional fabric of Chinese agriculture, constitutes the foundation of China's national economy at the present stage of its development.
18. Form and size of land ownership: It has been estimated that about three and a half centuries ago only half of the total acreage of cultivated land in China was in private ownership, the other half of it being distributed into: royal estate and state land, 27.2%; temple and ancestral land, 13.6% and land for military colonization, 9.2% (21). Owing to a process of alienation of public and semi-public domains during the Ch'ing Dynasty, and to the progressive disintegration of collective ownership in temple, ancestral and school land since the Republic Era, practically all farm land in China is now privately owned. Late in 1865 in the Ch'ing Dynasty, it was reported that 92.7% of the cultivated land in China belonged to private ownership and 7.3% of it was of such categories as Manchurian Estate, state land, temple and ancestral land (22). According to a sample survey conducted by the Ministry of Interior of the Nationalist Government in 1934 and covering 24,408,244 land-owning families in seventeen provinces of China, as much as 97.3% of the cultivated land is today in private ownership and only 2.7% of it remains as "public". The prevalence of collective ownership in temple and ancestral land in South China accounts for the comparatively larger proportion of "public land" in Kwangsi, Hunan, Yunnan and Chekiang than in the other provinces included in the survey. It should be added that temple and ancestral land in China is usually under the management and control of individuals as "directors" or "managers" who treat it almost as private in its administration or disposal as well as in its social-economic relationship to the cultivators.

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## Form and size of land ownership in China (23)

| Provinces  | Private land    |               |              |              |                 | Public land    |       | Total  |
|------------|-----------------|---------------|--------------|--------------|-----------------|----------------|-------|--------|
|            | over 100<br>mow | 51-100<br>mow | 31-50<br>mow | 10-30<br>mos | below<br>10 mow | All<br>private |       |        |
| Kiangsu    |                 |               |              |              |                 |                |       |        |
| % families | 1.47            | 5.36          | 10.90        | 24.88        | 57.39           |                |       | 100.00 |
| % land     | 15.80           | 19.07         | 23.02        | 23.07        | 17.29           | 98.25          | 1.75  | 100.00 |
| Anwei      |                 |               |              |              |                 |                |       |        |
| % families | 1.76            | 5.23          | 8.82         | 18.75        | 65.44           |                |       | 100.00 |
| % land     | 15.63           | 21.81         | 21.79        | 18.15        | 20.12           | 97.50          | 2.50  | 100.00 |
| Hupei      |                 |               |              |              |                 |                |       |        |
| % families | 1.10            | 3.26          | 7.33         | 20.81        | 67.50           |                |       | 100.00 |
| % land     | 13.97           | 16.16         | 20.86        | 23.78        | 24.06           | 98.83          | 1.17  | 100.00 |
| Hunan      |                 |               |              |              |                 |                |       |        |
| % families | 0.66            | 2.50          | 5.50         | 17.90        | 73.44           |                |       | 100.00 |
| % land     | 9.56            | 13.07         | 19.21        | 26.60        | 26.15           | 94.59          | 5.41  | 100.00 |
| Shantung   |                 |               |              |              |                 |                |       |        |
| % families | 0.94            | 3.90          | 10.54        | 27.27        | 57.35           |                |       | 100.00 |
| % land     | 11.12           | 16.93         | 24.97        | 27.25        | 19.12           | 99.39          | 0.61  | 100.00 |
| Shansi     |                 |               |              |              |                 |                |       |        |
| % families | 3.78            | 11.12         | 17.69        | 30.34        | 37.07           |                |       | 100.00 |
| % land     | 22.02           | 26.67         | 23.54        | 19.16        | 7.91            | 99.30          | 0.70  | 100.00 |
| Honan      |                 |               |              |              |                 |                |       |        |
| % families | 1.63            | 5.02          | 11.96        | 26.38        | 55.01           |                |       | 100.00 |
| % land     | 15.67           | 19.17         | 24.74        | 24.32        | 15.18           | 99.08          | 0.92  | 100.00 |
| Hopeh      |                 |               |              |              |                 |                |       |        |
| % families | 1.68            | 5.80          | 12.68        | 28.44        | 51.40           |                |       | 100.00 |
| % land     | 15.12           | 20.26         | 24.64        | 25.03        | 14.61           | 99.66          | 0.34  | 100.00 |
| Shensi     |                 |               |              |              |                 |                |       |        |
| % families | 2.49            | 11.73         | 15.91        | 22.33        | 47.54           |                |       | 100.00 |
| % land     | 18.81           | 31.03         | 22.70        | 17.02        | 8.92            | 98.48          | 1.52  | 100.00 |
| Chekiang   |                 |               |              |              |                 |                |       |        |
| % families | 0.62            | 2.21          | 5.32         | 15.43        | 76.42           |                |       | 100.00 |
| % land     | 18.27           | 11.59         | 16.99        | 21.74        | 28.15           | 96.74          | 3.26  | 100.00 |
| Kwangtung  |                 |               |              |              |                 |                |       |        |
| % families | 2.02            | 3.66          | 6.12         | 17.46        | 70.74           |                |       | 100.00 |
| % land     | 20.85           | 16.93         | 15.66        | 18.67        | 23.76           | 95.87          | 4.13  | 100.00 |
| Kwangsi    |                 |               |              |              |                 |                |       |        |
| % families | 0.65            | 2.37          | 7.21         | 21.45        | 68.32           |                |       | 100.00 |
| % land     | 34.85           | 8.77          | 13.41        | 17.60        | 12.81           | 87.44          | 12.56 | 100.00 |
| Yunnan     |                 |               |              |              |                 |                |       |        |
| % families | 1.11            | 2.45          | 7.01         | 17.08        | 72.35           |                |       | 100.00 |
| % land     | 24.42           | 11.56         | 18.06        | 19.23        | 21.04           | 94.31          | 5.69  | 100.00 |
| Kansu      |                 |               |              |              |                 |                |       |        |
| % families | 6.47            | 12.83         | 18.03        | 27.07        | 35.60           |                |       | 100.00 |
| % land     | 30.74           | 27.12         | 19.94        | 13.74        | 7.84            | 99.38          | 0.62  | 100.00 |
| Chinghai   |                 |               |              |              |                 |                |       |        |
| % families | 11.10           | 15.99         | 22.60        | 24.79        | 25.52           |                |       | 100.00 |
| % land     | 64.22           | 15.44         | 9.45         | 6.14         | 2.02            | 97.27          | 2.73  | 100.00 |
| Chahar     |                 |               |              |              |                 |                |       |        |
| % families | 7.36            | 13.68         | 18.57        | 26.88        | 33.51           |                |       | 100.00 |
| % land     | 42.32           | 23.17         | 17.23        | 11.52        | 4.77            | 99.01          | 0.99  | 100.00 |
| Suiyuan    |                 |               |              |              |                 |                |       |        |
| % families | 19.26           | 21.26         | 23.65        | 20.63        | 15.20           |                |       | 100.00 |
| % land     | 26.16           | 21.42         | 13.11        | 6.34         | 1.48            | 98.51          | 1.49  | 100.00 |
| Average    |                 |               |              |              |                 |                |       |        |
| % families | 3.77            | 7.61          | 12.34        | 22.82        | 53.46           |                |       | 100.00 |
| % land     | 25.28           | 18.82         | 19.37        | 18.79        | 15.02           | 97.28          | 2.72  | 100.00 |

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19. Private land ownership is mostly in very small holdings. As revealed by the survey of the Ministry of Interior table above, almost nine-tenths of the land owners possess an acreage of less than 50 mow or less than 8 acres each and over half of them less than 10 mow or less than one acre and a half each. The size of land ownership varies from region to region. On the whole it may be said that land holdings are relatively larger in North China than in South China. For instance, in the province of Suiyuan, 59% of the land owners possess an acreage of 50 mow each, but 41% of them more than 50 mow each and nearly 20% of them over 100 mow each. In the province of Chekiang, however, as many as 96% of the land owners possess an acreage of 50 mow each and more than three-fourths of them less than 10 mow each, but only 0.62% of them over 100 mow each. The difference in the size of land ownership is due primarily to the greater productivity and, hence, higher value of farm land in South China than in North China.
20. Inequality of land distribution: While China possesses no landed aristocracy or a dominant class of "junkers" or "squires", grave inequalities of land holdings nevertheless exist in the distribution of landed property. The survey of the Ministry of Interior shows that land owners of over 100 mow each, who constitute only 3.77% of the total farming population, own as much as one-fourth of the cultivated land, while those of less than 10 mow each, comprising 53.46% of the total farming population possess but 15% of the cultivated land. In some extreme cases, such as in the province of Kwangsi, land owners of over 100 mow each, forming only 0.65% of the total farming population, own as much as 34.85% of the cultivated land, while those of 10 mow each, amounting to 68.32% of the total farming population, possess only 12.81% of the cultivated land. Another sample of 1,545 landlord families selected at random in eleven provinces by the National Land Commission in 1934 gives an average ownership per family of 2030 mow (about 320 acres) which, although it appears small by western standards, is over one hundred fold larger than the average ownership per family of 16.2 mow (about 2.5 acres) of 572,865 occupying peasant families chosen in the same regions and during the same period (24).
21. In addition to quantitative inequality of land distribution, there is also the inequality of land distribution in a qualitative sense. Good land has a greater marketability than poor land. Landlords or rich peasants usually have more of the good land in their possession than the poor peasants. A sample survey in Fu-yu District in Kwangtung in 1933 reveals that the land possession of landlord families claim a larger proportion of fields of the better quality, whereas that of the poor peasant families has a larger proportion of fields of poorer quality. Of the land owned by landlord families three-fifths in acreage is irrigated land and, hence, more fertile. Of the land owned by poor peasant families only 37% is irrigated while the remainder non-irrigated (25).
22. Tendency toward concentration: Statistics collected by the National Bureau of Agricultural Research of the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry on the extent of tenancy brings forth evidence of a definite trend toward concentration of private land ownership in China since the first decade of the present century. In 1911, 49% of the peasants were occupying owners, 28% tenants and 23% owned part of their farm land while renting the remainder. In the decades which have elapsed since the Republican Revolution, occupying ownership has lost ground and tenancy advanced. The proportion which occupying ownership forms of the total farming population dropped to 46% in 1931, 35% in 1938, and 37% in 1941, whereas that of tenants rose to 31% in 1931, 38% in 1938 and 36% in 1941 (26). The causes for the transfer of land into fewer hands are both political and economic. War and famine, excessive taxation by the government and exploitation by the money-lender, political disorder and economic instability - these and other factors have all their ruinous effect on the small occupying owners and contribute their share to the phenomenon of land concentration.
23. The degree of land concentration is more marked in South China than in North China, and more so in the neighborhood of great cities than in regions in the interior. In 1941 the distribution of the farming population in Szechuan of Southwestern China and Kwangtung of South China is 48% and 46% for tenants, 23% and 33% for part-tenants, and 29% and 21% for occupying owners respectively. On the other hand, the distribution of the farming population in Honan of North China and Ningsia of Northwestern China in 1941 is 20% and 15% for tenants, 21% and 11% for part-tenants and 59% and 74% for occupying owners respectively (27). In the delta region of the Yangtze River near Shanghai and that of Pearl River near Canton, from 70% to 90% of the land holdings are said to be rented. In such wealthy silk districts as Wusih,

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Soochow and Kashing along the Nanking-Shanghai-Hangchow Railway, there are landlords with holdings of over 10,000 mow each. In the provinces of Szechuan and Anhwei, in particular, where "official capital" finds its outlet principally in land purchase, sometimes through methods of doubtful propriety, the holdings of landlords not infrequently exceed 50,000 mow or even 100,000 mow each (28).

24. Land acquisition: Land acquisition through inheritance in China accounts for much more of the land owned by individuals than that through purchase. In Shing-tsei District of Hopeh, the ownership of land averages 28 mow per family of which 64% is acquired through inheritance and only 36% through purchase (29). In Ping-hu District of Chekiang, as much as 88% of the land owned by individuals owes its origin to inheritance (30). In traditional China, all sons inherit equally, though sometimes a somewhat larger share goes to the eldest one in accordance with the custom of "ceremonial primogeniture". The institutionalization of equal inheritance by all the sons which, as we have noted in the above, constitutes one of the reasons for the prevalence of fragmentation of cultivation, may also partly explain the predominance of small holdings in the ownership of land in China.
25. In traditional China individual ownership of land is never complete in the modern sense of the term. For one thing, an individual landowner in China must have the consent of the important members of his family or clan before he can sell or even mortgage his land; nor can he sell or mortgage his land to an outsider unless none of his family or clan members is willing or able to purchase it. In some cases, a sale of land remains incomplete even after the transaction. There is, for instance, an institution called "Dead Head and Living Tail", by which the original landowner has the right to negotiate with the new landowner for the redemption of the land after the completion of the transaction of sale. The existence of such customary practice is obviously due to the immobility of and limited market for land in a static economy. For another, an individual landowner has a restricted freedom in the disposal or use of his land. In some regions, for instance, there is a dual property right of land, namely: bottom right, or the right of rent-collection which belongs to the landlord, and surface right, or the right of cultivation which belongs to the permanent tenant. Both bottom right and surface right are independent of each other, and can be freely sold, bought, or transmitted by inheritance. The holder of the bottom right of land can not cultivate the land himself so long as the permanent tenant pays his rent. In recent decades, however, there has been a definite tendency toward an increasing completeness in landownership and a unification of property rights, thus undermining permanent tenancy and facilitating land transaction and concentration.
26. Chinese landlordism: Landlords in China, unlike those of the Prussian pattern in the past, do not carry on any direct cultivation of great estates, nor do they have large leasehold farms of the English type. They lease out their land in very small farms to individual peasant cultivators and collect rent from them directly or through agents. Most of them are resident-landlords who, as parties with the tenant in a business contract, not infrequently are able to maintain a cordial relationship with their partners for mutual benefit. With increasing land concentration, however, there has arisen a class of absentee landlords who are both parasitic and oppressive. According to a study by the National Agricultural Promotion Commission in 1941, 27.4% of the landlords in China are absentees (31). In some districts such as Kunsan near Shanghai, two-thirds of the landlords are absentees. In Pi Hsien near Chengtu, 70% of the landowners were absentee landlords. These absentee landlords completely detach themselves from the land and its cultivation, take all they can from it through their agents, but put very little into it in return.
27. Landlords in China, both resident and absentee, are multilateral in character. Chinese landlords are landlord-usurers, or landlord-usurer-merchants, or landlord-merchant-bureaucrats, and very few of them are pure and simple rent-collectors. At the same time, merchants and politicians would ultimately become landlords. In the spring of 1930, the Kiangsu Provincial Bureau of Civil Affairs made a study of 514 big landlords in the province. Of the total number of big landlords under study, 374 had their principal professions definitely known. 44.44% of them were military and civil officers, 34.5% were pawnshop and money shop owners, 17.9% were traders, and only 3.2% were industrial shareholders (32). Elsewhere in China, too, landlords rarely invest in industries; they practice usury almost universally, and some engage

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in business or act as administrative officers of one kind or another. It is this multilateral character of Chinese landlordism, rather than the landlord as a pure and simple rent-collector alone, that demands immediate rectification.

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|--------|------|--------|------|
| 721.1  | IL/C | 723.2  | 81L  |
| 722.5  | IL/C | 723.2  | 41L  |
| 621.01 | IL/C | 723.2  | 31L  |
| 723.21 | IL/C | 721.32 | IL/C |
| 723.2  | 21L  | 721.31 | IL/C |

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